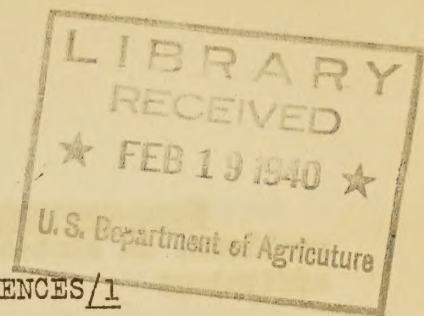


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A REVIEW OF FARM FAMILY LIVING OUTLOOK CONFERENCES/1

By  
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Once a year it is good procedure to review the progress of our work as extension economists in home management to see what progress we have made in helping farm families solve some of their economic problems. In doing so I have found it profitable to reaffirm some of my beliefs as follows:

That agriculture is a basic industry; that homemaking is also a basic industry.

That home-owned and operated farms are a goal for which we strive, as well as for conservation of soil.

That using physical resources wisely is as important as earning a living.

"The use of money is all the advantage there is in having money." Benjamin Franklin.

That since the family is the basic unit of society, decision making is a cooperative venture of all family members.

That living in a "money economy" will probably continue and so we must be concerned with economic education of boys and girls.

That the country will continue to supply children to the city, therefore we must help rural boys and girls learn to evaluate what is worth while in everyday living, no matter where they live.

That farm income should allow us to buy the products of industry, and that we need to know how to get our money's worth when we shop for industry's products.

That our women will have need to understand economic changes in other lands as well as in our own.

That levels of living are in continual change, and therefore every family can determine better ways of using its resources.

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/1 Talk given at the Agricultural and Farm Family Living Outlook Conference, Washington, D. C., October 31, 1939.



Home-management objectives that aim toward solving family economic problems, as stated for home demonstration workers, are also worth reaffirming:

To develop desirable standards for home and community life.

To obtain and manage an income, both money and nonmoney, which will contribute to better living.

To plan and manage both productive and leisure time to the end that energies and resources may best be conserved and utilized and that maximum satisfaction be gained.

To make such personal and family adjustments as are essential for individual and family security.

To utilize the results of scientific research in relation to rural home and family life.

The objectives of Farm Family Living Outlook work may be stated as follows:

To help farm families have a more satisfactory family living level through increased money and nonmoney income.

To help farm families spend incomes more wisely; to make decisions and adjustments for themselves.

To help extension workers and farm families to develop a sound, well-integrated, long-time program.

We next can ask ourselves, From whence have we come?

Family economic work in connection with the Extension Service was started 25 years ago, when the Smith-Lever Act was passed. Economic Facts for the Farm Home, /2 an extension publication calling attention to family economic problems, was first published in 1932.

In 1932 the Federal Bureau of Home Economics, Bureau of Agricultural Economics, and the Extension Service staff members conferred on the outlook for farm-family living and prepared a national report for the first time.

In 1933 the farm family outlook report was again included in the agricultural outlook reports.

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/2 Rokahr, Mary (assembled by). Economic Facts for the Farm Home. U. S. Dept. Agr. Misc. Ext. Pub. No. 7. 34 pp. Mimeographed. 1932.



In 1934 State home-management specialists and others attended the Outlook Conference for the first time. Program topics included: Consumer education; population trends; housing; relief; and food production. A circular on "Farm Family Living Outlook and What To Do About It" was prepared to help farm families apply the findings to their own situations.

In 1935, we discussed rural electrification, food production for home use, social security, health, time management, and consumer education.

In 1936 the Farm Family Living Outlook Report was given at the beginning of the conference so that the facts disclosed might be used during the entire conference week. Discussion topics included use of State household account summaries, home production, drought, family credit, resettlement-family budgets, and county planning.

In 1937, planning and the significance of Outlook in planning was the keynote of the conference. Other topics were food buying and production, household expenditures, outlook for family purchasing, application of National outlook to State conditions, and discussion questions for the farm family were circularized following the conference.

In 1938, the results of the Consumer Purchases Study were emphasized. Farm and home management analysis by case method was introduced. Income levels, credit, food production, and consumer education were emphasized. City and rural interrelationships appeared as a topic for the first time. A county agricultural and a home demonstration agent attended the outlook conference and gave talks on the application of outlook to county conditions.

Before making plans for the future, it is wise also to review past accomplishments that can be analyzed statistically. The family economic program has had a slow, steady growth, as is shown by the following data:



Statistical Results - 1932, 1936, 1937, 1938

Number of families assisted in using timely economic information -	<u>1932</u>	<u>1936</u>	<u>1937</u>	<u>1938</u>
a. As a basis for readjusting family living.....	....	65,647	76,118	92,768
b. As a basis for readjusting family food supply.....	....	212,284	249,527	270,486
c. In determining how best to meet clothing requirements....	....	126,237	142,158	151,895
Number of families assisted in mak- ing adjustments in homemaking to gain a more satisfactory standard of living.....	74,829	144,657	172,958	196,858
Number of families keeping home accounts according to recommended plan.....	17,650	29,758	32,421	37,614
Number of families budgeting ex- penditures in relation to income according to recommended plan....	11,718	20,589	22,584	25,327
a. Number of families budget- ing food expenditures for a year.....	43,855	63,687	72,138	77,173
b. Number of adults budgeting clothing expenditures.....	25,483	28,419	32,948	39,198
Number of 4-H Club members keeping personal accounts.....	....	28,236	30,999	36,346
Number of communities in which work was conducted in farm and home financing.....	....	12,199	13,397	16,165
Number of families following recom- mended methods in buying for the home.....	29,470	62,905	91,684	86,978
a. Following food-buying recommendations.....	....	126,297	144,113	168,989
b. Following clothing-buying recommendations.....	....	113,290	152,339	169,838



This brief review brings us to 1939 and the changing conditions we shall be facing. We are always concerned with good teaching methods or techniques and factual material that will help us to analyze and assist in solving economic problems of farm families. We are concerned with long-time as well as short-time planning, and have included on the program papers and discussions by both the Bureau of Home Economics and the State staffs of successful ways of developing such planning.

The 1940 literature that has been prepared includes the Farm Family Living Outlook Report and the Chart Book, and follow-up literature will be prepared on how extension workers can make better use of economic information in helping farm families with short- and long-time planning.

The case method is again being used by State staff members in presenting to us how a careful analysis of a given family situation clarifies for us the management problems which the family is facing and upon which it needs assistance. In this 1939 conference a county agent and a home demonstration agent will tell us what family economic problems the county land use planning work discloses.

Our own outlook as extension workers is as important as the outlook for farm families. In trying times people may ask: Are we wasting our time bringing people together for Outlook meetings? Should we urge people to keep farm and home accounts and use the results in planning? Can we be of any assistance with family money problems or are such problems private affairs?

Would we better emphasize how to earn more money than how to use it wisely? Are we overstressing money? Should we attack increased production and manufacture at home? Will the good of the most be reached quicker by emphasizing distribution problems?

Do we key the economic program to commercial farmers?

What do we know about growth of tenancy, and are we helping to put people into that class?

Is Outlook reflected in other extension programs?

"Those who create the demand create the future." -Harry E. Fosdick. The 1939 Outlook Conference should help us to unravel some of the complicated, difficult problems that we are facing; as they become clarified, we, in turn, will be able to help in clarification of the economic problems of farm families.

Education is a gradual process, but we can say with conviction that the more we have used outlook and economic facts the sounder has been the extension program; the more surely have farm families, as they used such facts, been able to get ahead financially. Sir Harold Bowden said: "Facts that are not frankly faced have a habit of stabbing us in the back."



We need to use teaching methods more effectively.

We need to learn how better to evaluate results.

The 1939 Agricultural and Farm Family Living Outlook Conference will be of real assistance to us all, but only as we, ourselves, do our own thinking, analyze our own needs, and find solutions that lead to action and resultant satisfactions.